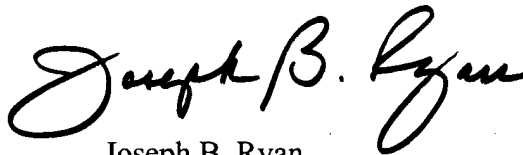


Applicant in a previous response filed November 7, 2003, submitted a Declaration of Prior Invention Under 37 C.F.R. §1.131. For the convenience of the Examiner, a copy of the Declaration and its attached exhibits is submitted herewith. The Declaration was signed by the sole inventor named on the present application. The Declaration and the exhibits attached thereto evidence conception of the invention at least as early as April 29, 1998, and thus prior to the June 11, 1998 effective filing date of the McAllister reference. The Declaration and the exhibits attached thereto further evidence due diligence from prior to said effective filing date to the filing of the present application. Applicant believes that the claims of the McAllister reference and the present application are not directed to the same invention and are not obvious variants. Applicant is therefore entitled to overcome the §102(e) rejection using a Declaration of Prior Invention Under 37 C.F.R. §1.131, in accordance with MPEP §§706.02(b) and 715.

Applicant believes that the application is in condition for allowance, and respectfully requests the withdrawal of the §102(e) rejection.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Joseph B. Ryan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Joseph" and last name "Ryan" clearly legible.

Date: October 7, 2004

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Enclosure(s): Copy of Declaration of Prior Invention Filed November 7, 2003